

This Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A process for preparation of a free-flowing granular sugar ingredient suitable for forming compressed confections, the process comprising:

feeding granulated sucrose and a solution of corn syrup to a twin screw-fed mixer comprising a feed end, a discharge end, and one or more flights on the screws that cause forward pressure while permitting back flow, wherein the granulated sucrose and corn syrup solution are back-mixed to provide a uniform wet mixture of the sucrose coated with the corn syrup, the corn syrup is employed in an amount within the range of from about 3 to 8% by weight, and the corn syrup solution has a solids content of from about 55 to 75% by weight;

discharging the wet mixture from the discharge end without explosive decompression to a size reduction comminutor to break up lumps;

feeding the comminuted wet mixture to a drier to produce a dried mixture;

feeding the dried mixture to a sieve;

and

recovering granules of sucrose bound together by corn syrup solids, wherein from 0% to 10% of the recovered granules will pass through a 100 mesh screen.

Claim 2 (previously presented): A process according to claim 1, wherein the wet mixture has a moisture content of less than about 3% by weight upon discharge from the mixer and the dried mixture has a moisture content of less than about 1% by weight.

Claim 3 (previously presented): A process according to claim 1 wherein the sucrose has a grind size of from 10X to 4X.

Claim 4 (canceled).

Claim 5 (currently amended): A process for preparation of a free-flowing granular sugar ingredient suitable for forming compressed confections, the process comprising:

feeding granulated sucrose and a solution of corn syrup to a twin screw-fed mixer comprising a feed end, a discharge end, and one or more flights on the screws that cause forward pressure while permitting back flow, wherein the granulated sucrose and corn syrup solution are back-mixed to provide a uniform wet mixture of the sucrose coated with the corn syrup;

discharging the wet mixture from the discharge end without explosive decompression to a size reduction comminutor to break up lumps;

feeding the comminuted wet mixture to a drier to produce a dried mixture; and
recovering granules of sucrose bound together by corn syrup solids, wherein from 40 to 80% of the recovered granules will pass through a 10 mesh screen and be retained on a 60 mesh screen.

Claim 6 (previously presented): A process according to claim 5 wherein the corn syrup is employed in an amount within the range of from about 3 to 8% by weight of the uniform wet mixture, and the corn syrup solution has a solids content of from about 55 to about 75% by weight.

Claim 7 (previously presented): A process according to claim 5 wherein the wet mixture discharged from the mixer contains less than about 5% by weight moisture.

Claim 8 (previously presented): A process according to claim 5 wherein the dried mixture contains less than about 3% by weight moisture.

Claim 9 (previously presented): A process according to claim 5 wherein the sucrose has a grind size of from 10X to 4X and the corn syrup solution has a solids content of from about 55 to about 75% by weight upon entering the mixer.

Claim 10 (previously presented): A process according to claim 5 wherein the sucrose has a grind size of from 10X to 4X, the corn syrup solution has a solids content of from about 55 to about 75% by weight upon entering the mixer, the corn syrup is

employed in an amount within the range of from about 3 to 8% by weight of the uniform wet mixture, the wet mixture contains less than 5% by weight moisture upon discharge from the mixer, the wet mixture is dried in a fluidized bed drier, and the dried mixture has a moisture content of less than about 3% by weight.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A process for preparation of a compressed confection, the process comprising:

- (a) preparing a granulated sugar ingredient by a process comprising
 - feeding granulated sucrose and a solution of corn syrup to a twin screw-fed mixer comprising a feed end, a discharge end, and one or more flights on the screws that cause forward pressure while permitting back flow, wherein the granulated sucrose and corn syrup solution are back-mixed to provide a uniform wet mixture of the sucrose coated with the corn syrup;
 - discharging the wet mixture from the discharge end without explosive decompression to a size reduction comminutor to break up lumps;
 - feeding the comminuted wet mixture to a drier to produce a dried mixture; and
 - recovering granules of sucrose bound together by corn syrup solids, wherein from 0% to 10% of the recovered granules will pass through a 100 mesh screen;
- (b) mixing the granulated sugar ingredient with flavor; and
- (c) compressing the granulated sugar ingredient and flavor to form a compressed candy.

Claim 12 (previously presented): A process according to claim 11 wherein the sucrose has a grind size of from 10X to 4X, the corn syrup solution has a solids content of from about 55 to about 75% by weight upon entering the mixer, and the corn syrup is employed in an amount within the range of from about 3 to 8% by weight of the uniform wet mixture.

Claim 13 (previously presented): A process according to claim 11 wherein the wet mixture has a moisture content of less than about 5% by weight upon discharge from the mixer.

Claim 14 (previously presented): A process according to claim 11 wherein the wet mixture is dried in a fluidized bed drier.

Claim 15 (canceled).

Claim 16 (previously presented): A process according to claim 14 wherein the corn syrup solution has a solids content of from about 55 to about 75% by weight.

Claim 17 (previously presented): A process according to claim 11 wherein from 40 to 80% of the recovered granules will pass through a 10 mesh screen and be retained on a 60 mesh screen.

Claim 18 (previously presented): A process according to claim 17 wherein the corn syrup is employed in an amount within the range of from about 3 to 8% by weight of the uniform wet mixture, and the wet mixture contains less than about 5% by weight moisture upon discharge from the mixer, wherein the wet mixture is dried in a fluidized bed drier.

Claim 19 (previously presented): A free-flowing granulated sugar ingredient prepared according to the process of claim 1.

Claim 20 (previously presented): A compressed confection prepared according to the process of claim 11.

Claim 21 (previously presented): A process according to claim 5 further comprising feeding the dried mixture to a sieve.

Claim 22 (previously presented): A process according to claim 11 further comprising feeding the dried mixture to a sieve.